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SANTA BARBARA

I.

Fold thy soft wings over me,
Gentle motherly Night,
With thy dim hair cover me
Safely from human sight,
From each wide-gazing creature
Shelter me in this hour :
Close thou the tender eyelids
Of ev'ry wondering flower.

Weary am I of the day-feast,
Weary of jest and song,
Dazed with the shifting pageant,
Tired of the tawdry throng :—
Fold thy grey plumes over me,
Evermore from the light
With thy soft hair cover me,
Gentle motherly Night.

II.

No budding roses have I strewn for thee
To wither on thy grave their wasted bloom,
Nor lusty forest creatures slain for thee
To sacrifice upon thy lonely tomb.

But for thy sake the untamed agony
The savage rapture of my grief have slain;
And on thy grave I trample cruelly
The tender blossoms of my thorny pain.

III.

Thy pleasure is my rapture,
Thy fear my terror is,
Why should to-day thy sorrow
Fill me with ecstasies?

As cooling streams in summer
Thy rippling welcomes be,
But thy hot tears at parting
Are heavenly wine to me.

IV.

THE SEASONS.

I am a silver birch-tree,
And thou a summer wind
With rush of beauty stirring
The weak leaves of my mind.

I am the birch-tree, and thou
The coolness of autumn rain,
Soberly chastening and mellowing
My fancies giddy and vain.

Or when my thoughts are lifeless
Withered and dark and sere,
Thou art a ruthless north-wind
Stripping me clean and bare.

And thou the air that fillest
With warmth my gladsome spring,
The buds of a pure passion
Gently awakening.

V.

Lift up thy veil, shy Morrow,
Shew me thy smiling glee,
Tell me what nectar-chalice
Thou hast in store for me.

Why at the Night's dim threshold
Lingerest thou so coy?
Lift thy white veil, shy Morrow,
Shew me thy dazzling joy.

"I am not veiled for coyness,
No beauty-smile is mine,
In this close-hidden chalice
Is no sweet nectar-wine.

Pitying thee I linger
At Night's dark door of tryst,
Slowly with shrinking sorrow
Raise up my veil of mist."

VI.

March 28, 1911.

In the still depth of the pine-wood
Where hardly the warm air stirs,
And doves listlessly murmur
In the dreamy tops of the firs;—

In the scented heart of the pine-wood
Where basking snakes lie bare
And scorching dead leaves rustle,
Old Febrûs doth now prepare.

There carefully doth he parcel
New buds for every bower,
The pale robes folding in order
For each soft unborn flower.

The idle beasts are deserting
The sleepy warmth of their lair
In the still depth of the pine-wood,
And vacantly on him stare.

VII.

Flowers on sunny pastures high
Blindly gazing on the sky
Envy not the glory there :

They with softly-answered prayer
For their simple artistry
Shape their beauty-cups and die.

But the soul's unresting eyes
From the prison where he lies,
See the freedom of the stars :

Their long raylets through the bars
Fever him with discontent
In his dingy tenement.

VIII.

Rest ye now, poor limbs,
 So wander-tired ;—
Now the moon-ship lies stranded,
 Sunset-fired ;

Now pale star-fleets gather
 Their scattered sail,
Now tortured cloud-leviathans
 Forget the gale,

Their monster shapes refashioning
 Against the morn ;—
Rest thee now, poor soul,
 So bruised and torn.

IX.

A lily-cup is the vale
With its hill-calyx pale
And misty petal-shires,
And shining dome that tells
With city-clustered spires
Where nectarous learning dwells,
While great noon-bells
As the boom of droning honey-bees aspire.

But the hill is a strong pine
Where branching pathways twine ;—
There let me ever dream
In freedom-scented nest,
Counting against the gleam
In thought-engendering rest,
My cones sun-blest,
My ever-living needles of desire.

X.

THE GARDEN TORTOISE.

So sad, so vague thy listless gait,
 So slow thy poor head yearns and strains,—
Did some young freakish angel fill
 With Lethe-slime thy pulseless veins?

And tired of ruminating death,
 Tak'st thou one sip of life's hot wine,
Finding it strange to thy weak mouth,
 And shrinking dost its joy decline?

Alone of all the garden-folk
 Dost thou no fresh spring-garment wear,
But in thy age-old armour-cloak
 Bewildered on our mirth dost stare.

XI.

When my fair love speaketh,
To do her bidding stand,
With crystal scimitars drawn,
Close-ranked on either hand,
The eager armies of dawn.

When she gaily laugheth,
Round her bright head conspire,
Fluttering in rich festoon,
Leaf-winged with amber fire,
The golden cherubs of noon.

But if in wounding sadness
Her delicate form be bowed,
Hiding the world's delight
Rush as a thick-winged cloud
The avenging legions of night.

XII.

MARY MAGDALENE.

THOU my dishevelled pride up-gatherest
To coronet fair
Of shining chaste-filleted hair ;

My sombre terror pityingly refashionest,
Making each tear
A pearl of heavenly fear ;

But still, lovingly, fondly, treasurest
Tenderly apart,
My remorse-shattered heart.

XIII.

I come when her golden mirth
Deserts the willow,
When flowerless in thorny dearth
Is her meadowy pillow,
When frozen her singing stream, forlorn and dumb,—
I swiftly come.

Thy dancing joys are fled;
Now silently over thee,
Pitying thy desolate bed
Shall white peace cover thee:
Now when thy pearly mirth is chilled and numb,
I softly come.

XIV.

JOHN BAPTIST.

My home
The shimmery-bounded glare,
The gazing fire-hung dome
Of scorching air.

My rest
To wander, trembling-weak,
On vague hunger-quest
New hope to seek.

For friend
The dazzling breathing dream,
The strength at last to find
Of Glory Supreme.

XV.

THE MORNING MOON.

O lily-lady,
Dreaming serenely alone in cloud-garden shady,
No longer may'st thou muse, no more repose,

O lily-lady,
In thy garden shady.

The great rose
Now waking, his crimson splendour doth loftily dispose ;
Now is thy calm day done, now the star-daisies close,

O lily-lady,
In thy garden shady.

XVI.

Kindly Summer is come,
 Summer so fair
With shining sun-bright eyes
 And corn-yellow hair.

To warm the naked poor
 Is Summer here,
The wanderer with lavished
 Fruits to cheer :

To spread of innocent joy
 A bounteous feast
For every simple soul
 Of bird and beast.

And would that sweet Summer
 Ever might stay
To clothe in bright beauty
 Our spirits grey.

XVII.

THE SHEPHERD BOY.

The scattered sheep on the downland
To the lark in his glee
Are small white sails of fisher-boats
On a rolling sea.

And the haven where at nightfall
They hide from the gale
Is our peaceful love-lit homestead
In the calm vale.

XVIII.

Now my bright-eyed Hope is dead,
Fickle Love for ever fled,
Pleasure doth to others shew
Bright his gifts with bended knee :
Ah me,
Lonely is my garden now.

*By thine arbour ever stands
Patient Toil with outstretched hands—
Take her for thy Hope instead.
Now dull Scorn hath to thee led
High-souled Calm, her deathless son ;
And see,
With sad Pain whom thou dost shun,
Noble Strength doth visit thee.*

XIX.

I have called in vain to Sleep;
 She has shut her gate,
She has left me alone to wait,
 Unpitied to weep:

She has taken the cedars kind,
 The soft-eyed deer,
She has left me the loveless mere,
 And the deaf wind.

XX.

Sunbeams, that linger
On orchard wall
With glowing finger
Ere evening fall,

Your warmth supernal
Shall treasured be
In ripening kernel
And unborn tree.

And thou, fair smile
That didst my heart
Caress awhile
And then depart,

Thy branching might
Is now begun,
Though lost in night
My joyous sun.

XXI.

THINE are the ageless stars, and born of Thee,
The mortal thoughts of an immortal mind,
 Fast law-entwined,
Enmeshed in thine undying memory.

And thine the beauty of earth's plant-empire,
And beasts in ever-varying glory drest ;
 Thy joy express'd,
The shifting symbols of thy warm desire.

And whence are we? Of thy divine love-store,
Loving, hast thou our slender love-life made,
 That unafraid
We may thy dazzling love see and adore.

XXII.

SONG.

My love for thee
When thou art smilingly by,
Is a wild compelling frolic of sun-flecked sea,
A dancing spirit swaying to songs of glee
Things in the listless deeps that palely lie.

But what is become
My cherished love to-day?
A voided shell where echoing sea-sighs roam,
The marble walls of an empty abandoned home
Lacking its soul and life, thy Presence gay.

XXIII.

THE IDIOT.

Where are the lowland meadows
Of springing grace?
A grey sea swept them over
And left no trace.

*Under the waves their hillocks
Are strangely green
With fanciful growths and sea-flowers
Of weird sheen.*

Where is the tree-hid shrine
Where serene prayer
With rapturous anthem dwelt
And worship fair?

*Through darkened aisles wander
Strange fish, scare-eyed;
And round the altar the wily
Sea-serpents glide.*

XXIV.

CHARLES I.

Come, cruel dawn,
 Thy cold sword
Shall unresisted sweep
My lonely flowering lawn
 Of life abhorred.

Come, passionate noon,
 My hated plain
Of power, scorch with thy wrath,
Destroy, shedding soon
 Thy withering pain.

Come then, calm night,
 Through mists of fear
My godhead's lonely height
Shall pierce unto thy light,
 Thy wisdom clear.

XXV.

PRASCOVIA.

Where,
Once lovely ship, stranded on deathly shoal,
Battered and foul, where are thy high-born crew,
 To far-off goal
That gaily adventured on thee their treasure rare?

From shore,
From natal haven I saw thee joyously ride,
For opulent trade rich-laden, innocent-swelling
 Thy morn-lit pride,
And heard thy youth-song eager for stormy war.

It came,
That roaring, thundering army of quick-succeeding fears,
That destiny-sundering, soul-mastering agony of wild
 Desolate tears,
Flooding thy beauty pure with hideous shame.

Again
I saw thee, fleeing before thy windy-rushing fate,
Thy fair pride rent, thy slender powers astrain,
 Thy priceless freight
O'erthrown, a terror-given sacrifice to ease thy pain.

Where
Once splendid ship, nakedly as a corpse up-tost,
Where is thy vanquished soul? Still far the heavenly haven;
 Far-scattered, lost
In world-care lone and wide the treasure rare.

XXVI.

GOOD FRIDAY.

Where tender flowers up-torn
 Lonely to die,
By angel hands are planted
The cooling love-enchanted
 Streams anigh ;

Where pure-joyed woodland creatures
 Lustfully slain,
To squandering slaughter driven,
Their fair strength meekly given
 Receive again ;

Thy delicate love rejected
 Shall drink the dew,
Thy wistful comfort wasted
Shall there its power untasted
 Revive anew.

XXVII.

THE MOON.

She drifts on waveless seas
Where unseen tides
Of sunless forces freeze
Her shrinking sides ;

Gazing where sphered in cloud
Earth palely gleams
With joy whose glimpses crowd
Her vanishing dreams ;

And ever mocking her fears
With soulless glare
The far-throned infinite stars
Unpitying stare.

XXVIII.

My home is where in clustering spell
The tall dream-poplars stand,
Where sleeping plains of asphodel
Are all the shimmering land.

And never gusty truth shall chill
Their basking bliss outspread,—
The groves are ever warm and still
Where lingering spirits tread.

For living swords of keen desire
Guard jealously and well
The garden where in crownèd quire
The ancient poets dwell.

XXIX.

Mourn we the mighty wood-king,

For grief he died.

They wounded the giant pines

His splendid pride ;

And cunningly then they ensnared,

With treacherous art,

The innocent singing joys

Of his deep heart.

XXX.

Silver and gold is the birch
 When trembleth she
At winter's chilly coming,
Knowing her sunshine-search
 In vain to be.

And so are the quivering shroud
 Of unheard prayer,
The white limbs slenderly curving,
Thy golden shimmery cloud
 Of radiant hair.

XXXI.

THE SAILING SHIP.

She proudly rides,
The calmly waning goddess of winds and tides,
In silvery beauty still her fierce rivals outshining,
Graciously inclining
Her delicate virgin glory and stately sides.

Yet soulless she,
Will-less as wandering air or wavering sea,
Like those bright divinities out-knowledged now and despised,
Gropingly devised
To compass the earth's unfathomed ecstasy.

XXXII.

L'APRÈS-MIDI D'UN FAUNE.

Lov'st thou tawny trees?
I can shew thee soon
Stranger sights than these.

Throngs of wildered kings
 Their power who sold,
Wearing its ruddy price
 In coins of gold.

Lov'st thou lilies white,
Untrod vales where bask
Fields of scented light?

Come where cloistered queens
 By thousands sing
Their virgin saintliness
 Warm-sheltering.

Wilt thou strength and life?
Wilt thou beauteous ease
Far from soiling strife?

When thy powers surrender
 Their glory tall,
When thy calm soft-closeth
 At evening fall,

When no joys shall please,
I can still devise
Fairer things than these.

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